

# Digital Literacy: Teaching Students to Fact-Check

Online professional learning for school library staff based on research into the use of Wikipedia for lateral reading.

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May 17, 2022





# Our classroom resources: Curriculum alignment

## Year Six English (literacy strand):

- Compare texts including media texts that represent ideas and events in different ways, explaining the effects of the different approaches. (ACELY1708)
- Participate in and contribute to discussions, clarifying and interrogating ideas, developing and supporting arguments, sharing and evaluating information, experiences and opinions. (ACELY1709)

## Year Seven English (literacy strand):

- Analyse and explain the effect of technological innovations on texts, particularly media texts (ACELY1765).

## Year Seven Media Arts:

- Analyse how technical and symbolic elements are used in media artworks to create representations influenced by story, genre, values and points of view of particular audiences (ACAMAR071).

## Year Eight Civics and Citizenship (skills):







- Critically analyse information and ideas from a range of sources in relation to civics and citizenship topics and issues (ACHCS070).

# GENERAL CAPABILITIES:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Literacy
- Personal and Social Capability



# A lesson resource overview:

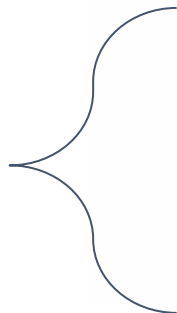
1	<b>Is the Earth flat?</b> 	How do we know what we know? What is a reliable source?	I know what a reliable source of authority is.
2	<b>Is Wikipedia Reliable?</b> 	Understanding Wikipedia [Article page, Talk page, History, Policies]	I know when Wikipedia articles are reliable.
3	<b>Street Sandwich</b> 	Lateral reading	I know when I should check if a claim or person is reliable.
4	<b>Why You So Mad?</b> 	Learning to investigate ideas rather than attacking a person. Thinking before sharing ideas online.	I can identify an ad hominem argument.
5	<b>Red Cars</b> 	The difference between something being ubiquitous and something being true (cognitive bias).	I understand that seeing something everywhere (ubiquity) doesn't mean that it is true.
6	<b>Garage Dragon</b> 	Testing hypotheses; the possibility of falsification.	I understand the importance of testing hypotheses, and the difference between belief and evidence.

Foundations



Advanced

Still to be implemented



# Lesson One:

## Learning Intention:

*I know what a reliable source of authority is.*

This lesson sequence takes students through working out how to determine what is true and what is not.

It discusses how to determine trustworthy sources.



**Is the Earth flat?**

**We know that if we hold something up and drop it, gravity will attract it to the ground.**

**We know this is true because we can see it.**

**But what about things we can't see?**

**How do we know if they are true or not?**





**We are told the Earth is a sphere and  
people on the other side don't fall off because of gravity.  
But how do we know if this is true?**



**The Apollo 8  
astronauts were  
the first to see the  
Earth from space.  
But we can't all go  
to space.**

**We can look at  
the horizon.**





**The Ancient Greeks worked out the Earth is a sphere.**

**They used the science of the time.**

**Science evolves but is based on a core principle: having evidence (or proof) you can verify.**

**Scientists publish their findings (what they have discovered) so others can check them.**



**Over time, scientific  
knowledge becomes  
widely known.**

**But where do we get our  
information from?  
Family, friends, TV, social  
media...**

**How do we know for sure?  
What is a reliable source?  
Who do we trust?**



Dictionaries and encyclopedias  
are written by **experts** who study a topic,  
verified by **editors**, and released by **publishers**.

Some examples are the Encyclopaedia Britannica or the Macquarie Dictionary.  
We trust these institutions or brands based on their reputation.

# Take aways

Who do you trust?

What is a trustworthy source?

**It's important to check information!**

# Lesson Two:

## Learning Intention:

*I know when Wikipedia articles are reliable.*

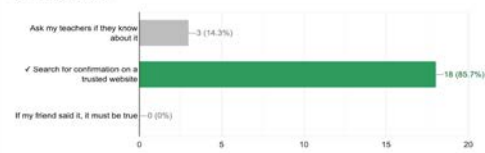
This lesson sequence takes students through the reasons why Wikipedia is a good fact-checking source, and how they can distinguish between a very reliable WP page and one that is less reliable.



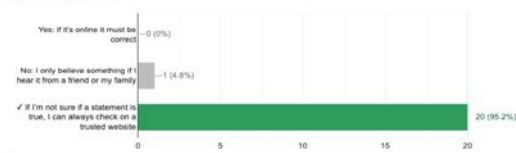
Is  
Wikipedia  
reliable?

# Primary School #1

If your friend told you that the government is planning to get rid of all \$2 coins, how would you check if it is true?  
18 / 21 correct responses



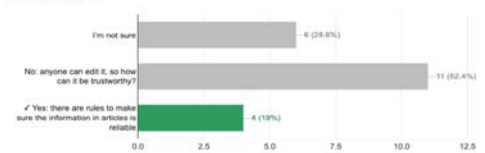
If you saw a post on social media that said that pimples can cause blindness, should you believe it?  
20 / 21 correct responses



Are photographs posted on social media trustworthy?  
8 / 21 correct responses

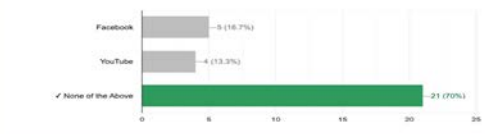


Should you trust information on Wikipedia?  
4 / 21 correct responses



# Primary School #2

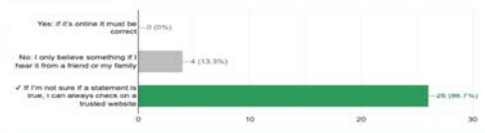
Out of the following websites, which one would you visit to check if it's true that the Queen of England contracted COVID?  
21 / 30 correct responses



If your friend told you that the government is planning to get rid of all \$2 coins, how would you check if it is true?  
27 / 30 correct responses



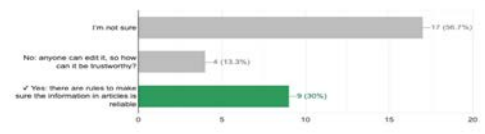
If you saw a post on social media that said that pimples can cause blindness, should you believe it?  
26 / 30 correct responses



Are photographs posted on social media trustworthy?  
14 / 30 correct responses

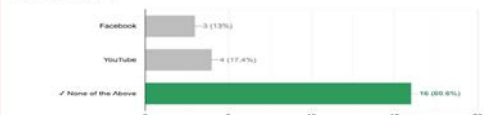


Should you trust information on Wikipedia?  
9 / 30 correct responses

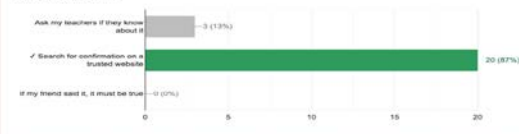


# Secondary School #1

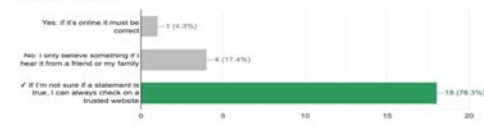
Out of the following websites, which one would you visit to check if it's true that the Queen of England contracted COVID?  
16 / 23 correct responses



If your friend told you that the government is planning to get rid of all \$2 coins, how would you check if it is true?  
20 / 23 correct responses



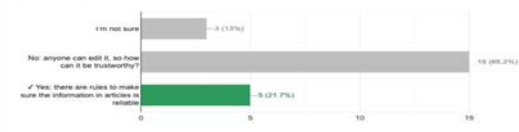
If you saw a post on social media that said that pimples can cause blindness, should you believe it?  
18 / 23 correct responses

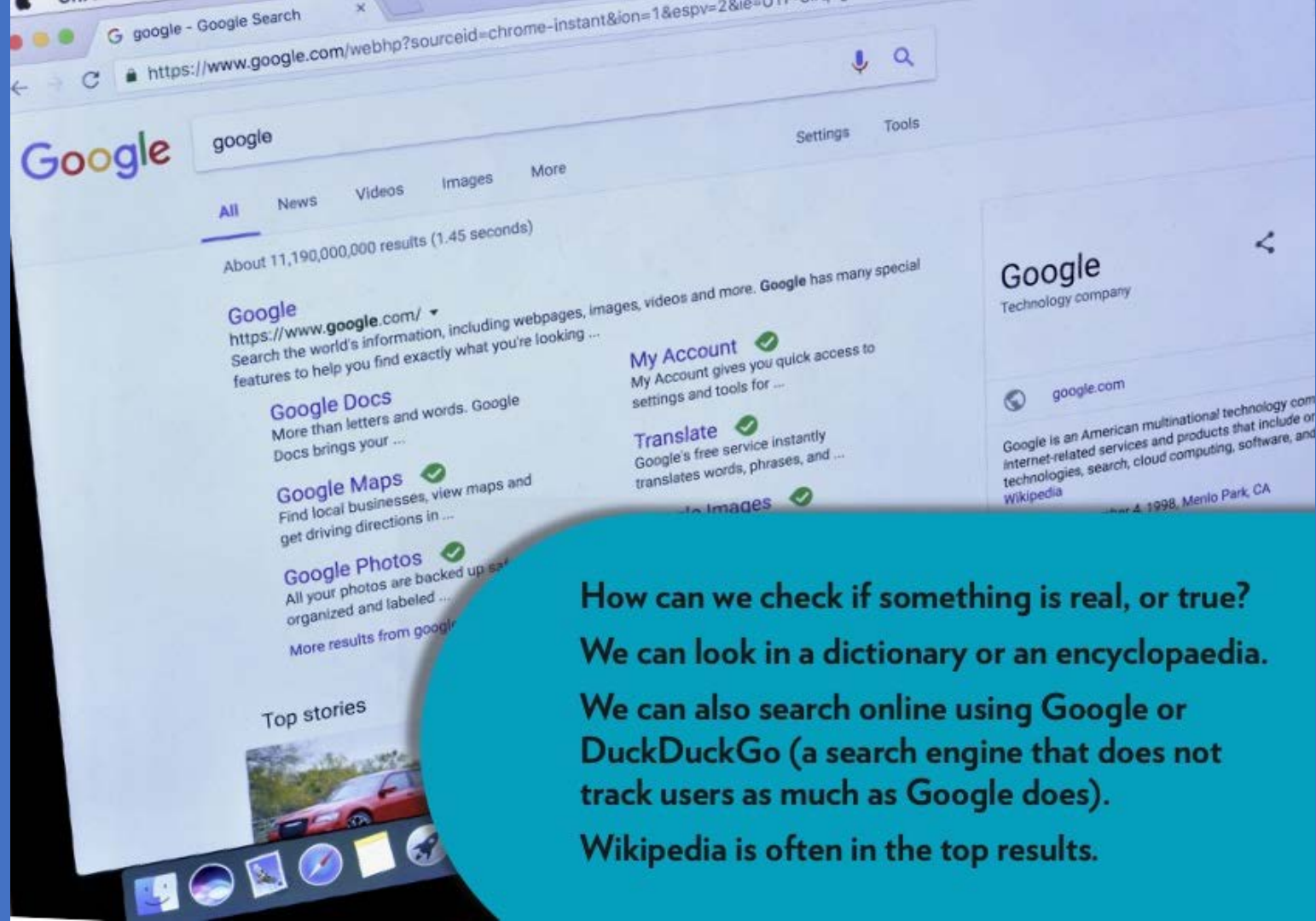


Are photographs posted on social media trustworthy?  
13 / 23 correct responses



Should you trust information on Wikipedia?  
5 / 23 correct responses





How can we check if something is real, or true?

We can look in a dictionary or an encyclopaedia.

We can also search online using Google or DuckDuckGo (a search engine that does not track users as much as Google does).

Wikipedia is often in the top results.

Wikipedia  
is an online  
encyclopaedia.

It has articles  
like Britannica  
(for example:  
'Australia').

But it is not done  
by professionals:  
anyone can edit an  
article, even you!

So, there are rules.

# WIKIPEDIA

The Free Encyclopedia

English

6 383 000+ articles

日本語

1 292 000+ 記事

Русский

1 756 000+ статей

Español

1 717 000+ artículos

Italiano

1 718 000+ voci

Polski

1 490 000+ haseł

Português

1 074 000+ artigos

Deutsch

2 617 000+ Artikel

Français

2 362 000+ articles

中文

1 231 000+ 條目

 EN 

Read Wikipedia in your language



Think of a Wikipedia article  
(for example 'Canberra') as a public garden.

Anyone can be a gardener. Anyone can plant a new flower bed  
or get rid of some weeds.

Some gardens are perfect: The rules were followed.



**What if people who are not gardeners start planting things incorrectly?**

**What if people who are not experts start adding silly things on Wikipedia?**

**What else could go wrong?**



## Welcome to the Garden

1. Come into the garden with an adult.
2. Walk at all times.

So, what are the rules (or policies) to make sure Wikipedia articles are reliable?

- Information in articles has to be **neutral**
- Information has to be based on **reliable sources**, like a book by an expert for example
- Information should **not be original research**.

Let's look at a well-made article.

It has a clear structure and references.

We can look for other indicators of quality on page 5 of the booklet *Reading Wikipedia in the classroom*.

## Anatomy of a Wikipedia article

As you keep exploring a Wikipedia article you will find more elements that can help you to structure your search for information and to expand your sources.

The diagram illustrates the structure of a Wikipedia article. A central figure of a person is shown walking along a path that leads to various sections of an article. The sections are represented by boxes and lists:

- Contents [hide]**: A table of contents listing the structure of the article.
  - 1 Early life
  - 2 Career
    - 2.1 Adulthood and early career: 1951-61
    - 2.2 Africa to Caged Bird 1961-69
    - 2.3 Later career
  - 3 Personal life
  - 4 Death
  - 5 Works
    - 5.1 Chronology of autobiographies
  - 6 Reception and legacy
    - 6.1 Influence
    - 6.2 Critical reception
    - 6.3 Awards and honors
    - 6.4 Uses in education
  - 7 Poetry
  - 8 Style and genre in autobiographies
  - 9 References
    - 9.1 Explanatory notes
    - 9.2 Citations
    - 9.3 Works cited
- References [edit]**: A list of references used in the article.
- Explanatory notes [edit]**: A list of explanatory notes for the references.
- Citations [edit]**: A list of citations for the references.

A table of contents presents how the content of an article is organized. It allows you to understand how the article is structured and helps you to optimize your information search.

This section compiles all the sources cited in an article. It can also contain notes clarifying or expanding on information contained in the article. You can use this section to expand your search for information beyond Wikipedia and find academic sources that you can include in their own research. Wikipedia should only be the beginning of your journey.

**References [edit]**

**Explanatory notes [edit]**

- <sup>[1]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* is the first novel in the series of *Angela's Ashes*.
- <sup>[2]</sup> According to Angela, Anna Henderson built her business with food stalls catering to black workers, which eventually developed into a shop.<sup>[3]</sup>
- <sup>[3]</sup> The correct Greek spelling of Angela's husband's name is probably "Anastasis Angelopoulos".<sup>[4]</sup>
- <sup>[4]</sup> *Review of Angela's Ashes* by M. L. Miller calls Angela's performance of her song "So That Happiness in the Marketplace" the "most genuine musical moment in the text".<sup>[5]</sup>
- <sup>[5]</sup> In Angela's third book of essays, *Letter to My Daughter* (2005), she credits Cuban artist Celia Cruz as one of the greatest influences of her singing career, and later credits Cruz for the effectiveness and impact of Angela's poetry performance and readings.<sup>[6]</sup>
- <sup>[6]</sup> Guy Johnson, who as a result of this accident in Africa and one in the late 1980s, underwent a series of spinal surgeries. He, like his mother, became a writer and poet.<sup>[7]</sup>
- <sup>[7]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* has a friendship with Malcolm X's "brotherhood relationship".<sup>[8]</sup>

**Citations [edit]**

- <sup>[1]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013. Archived from the original on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[2]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[3]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[4]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[5]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[6]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[7]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.
- <sup>[8]</sup> *Angela's Ashes* (2013). Retrieved from the Internet on December 17, 2013.



**Lets try it out.**

**Evaluate some  
articles using  
*My Knowledge  
Quest.***

**You'll find it on  
page 6 of your  
booklet.**

# Take aways

Wikipedia is free and easy to find.

**It's a good way to check information.**

Wikipedia articles should be

- based on reliable sources
- have a neutral point of view
- not be original research.

So be sure to avoid poorly edited articles (for example pages with a warning banner or no references).

# Lesson Three:

## Learning Intention:

*I know when I should check if a claim or person is reliable.*

This lesson introduces the concept of lateral reading. It uses the metaphor of a sandwich found on the street to discuss what kind of new information students should question.

## Street sandwich






**Imagine that  
you come  
across a  
sandwich,  
or perhaps  
someone  
offers  
you one.**

**If you had never met  
the person offering  
the sandwich you  
would be right to  
refuse it:**

**You have no way of  
knowing if it is OK  
or not.**





If you knew and trusted the person who gave it to you (like a friend), you might accept it — if you were hungry, and liked sandwiches.

**If you found a  
sandwich on the  
street: would you  
eat it?**

**You can't check  
if it's OK, so  
probably not.**





**Think of unfamiliar information as  
being like a sandwich on the street.  
If you are not sure if it is OK: check!**

# Take aways

What kind of new information should you question?

**If you are not sure about new information: CHECK!**

How do you check?

Do a search with Google or DuckDuckGo.

Look at the Wikipedia article.

If the article is OK (no warning banners for example):  
you have the answer.

# Thank you for coming today!



Please don't hesitate to get in touch:  
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Rachel.Cunneen@canberra.edu.au



# UNIVERSITY OF **CANBERRA**

The University of Canberra acknowledges the Ngunnawal people, traditional custodians of the lands where Bruce Campus is situated. We wish to acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of Canberra and the region. We also acknowledge all other First Nations Peoples on whose lands we gather.